



mosaic
town planning

Design and Access Statement

Proposed Development of 35 Affordable Homes
Land off Pilch Lane, Knowsley

On Behalf of Breck Homes

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a planning application for 35 affordable dwellings on land to the south of Pilch Lane in Dovecot, Knowsley.

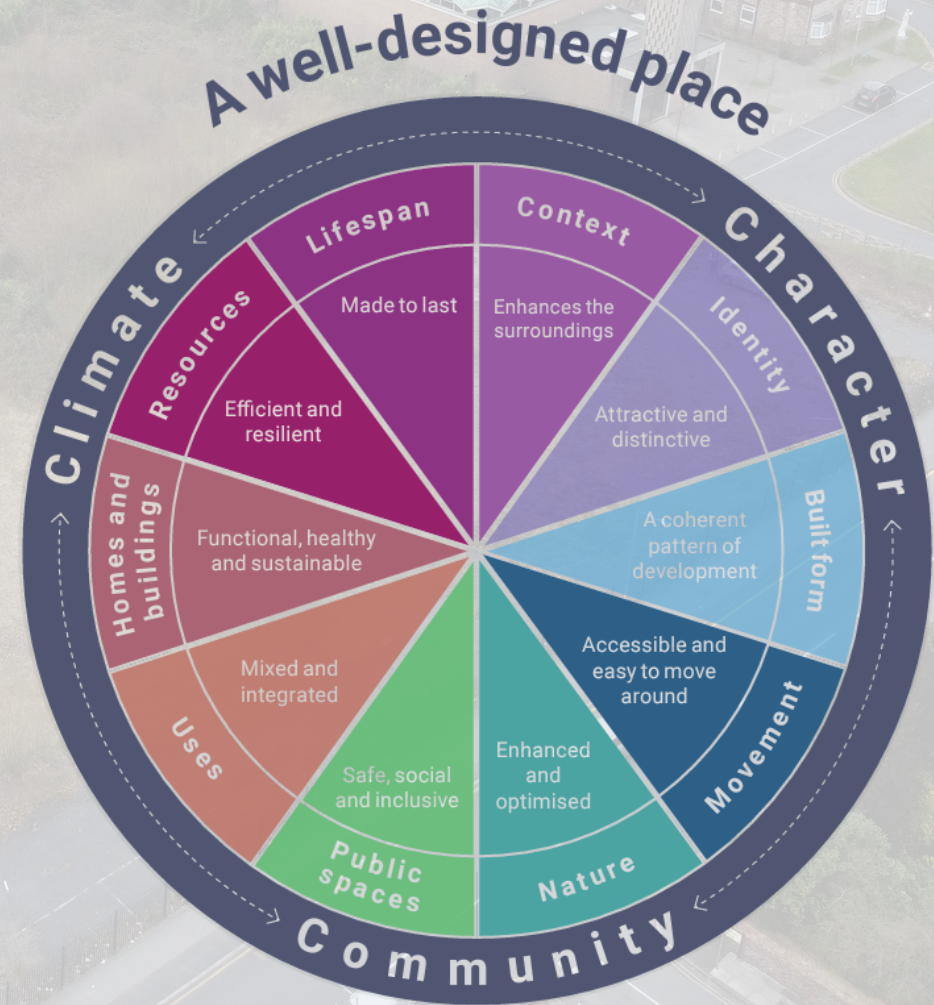
In accordance with Planning Practice Guidance, a Design and Access Statement should:

(a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development, and;

(b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account. (Paragraph: 031 Reference ID: 14-031-20140306).

This Statement is structured according to the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide (MHCLG 2019):

- Context – enhances the surroundings.
- Identity – attractive and distinctive.
- Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
- Nature – enhanced and optimised.
- Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
- Uses – mixed and integrated.
- Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
- Resources – efficient and resilient.
- Lifespan – made to last.



*The ten characteristics of well-designed places, from the National Design Guide.
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Chapter 2 - Context

The Context is defined by the National Design Guide as the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings.

The site is located on an area of previously developed land within the urban area of Knowsley.

The area is predominantly residential in character, with a mix of inter-war Council housing, interspersed with some examples of late Victorian Villas and more recent infill, suburban style development.

Adjoining the site to the northwest is St Margarets Church and the associated Primary School (Junior and Infants) beyond it. Open land is located to the west of the site, comprising a former bowling green and existing school playing field.

There is a District Centre at the junction of Pilch Lane and Childwall Lane to the southeast, comprising a number of shops and services. The character of the area is generally suburban with some associated services and facilities.

Knowsley itself is a largely urban authority situated between Liverpool in the west and St Helens to the east. Areas in and around Huyton and Dovecot have seen a significant amount of housing overspill from Liverpool since the 1930s, resulting in urban sprawl.

The area is relatively well served in terms of highways accessibility. The M62 runs to the south of the site and the A57 Prescott Road is situated to the north, both of these major arterial routes connect Knowsley with the wider region.

In terms of public transport accessibility, the area is connected by a good number of bus services which run along Pilch Lane and beyond. Roby Station is situated to the south east, providing rail services to Liverpool, St Helens and Manchester.



Chapter 3 - Identity

The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them.

Policy CS19

Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

- 1) To enhance the local distinctiveness, identity and accessibility of places, new development within Knowsley will be expected to:
 - a) Respond to and integrate positive characteristics of immediate surroundings, including local materials, scale, mass, form, layout, alignment and density of the existing built environment;
 - b) Complement and enhance (where possible), existing landscape, topography, Green Infrastructure; and features of local importance and historic interest;
 - c) Consider provision of landmark buildings and additional detailing at and adjacent to main gateways, movement corridors, town centres and strategic regeneration opportunities;
 - d) Create spaces and places as a focal point, accommodating social interaction and active lifestyles, including provision and integration of high quality public realm and open spaces, public art (as appropriate); and landscaping which promotes biodiversity and integrates existing local habitats;
 - e) Provide safe, secure and convenient routes for movement (including signage), with priority for walking, cycling and public transport, to meet the access needs of all users, particularly pedestrians, cyclists, less mobile people and the elderly;
 - f) Integrate effectively with existing development and link to existing shopping and service provision; and
 - g) Demonstrate community engagement during the design phase of major development proposals.
- 2) To maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of

Core Strategy Policy CS19 requires new development to be designed to enhance local distinctiveness, identity and accessibility.

The identity of Dovecot primarily arises from its role in rehousing Liverpool residents during the 1930s. This resulted in an extensive council housing programme in this area and also Huyton to the east.

The homes have distinctive hipped roofs, gable

features, chimneys and bay windows off curvilinear layouts. There are also a handful of Victorian Villas in and around Dovecot which pre-dated the suburban growth of the area.

Other, less common styles in the area include a 3-4 storey apartment block clad in white render and brick to the south of Pilch Lane. Most buildings in the settlement are either finished with brick, pebbledash or render, with dark, interlocking concrete roof tiles the dominant roof material.

The subject site will sit within established residential properties on Pilch Lane and more recently developed properties off it. Given the absence of a distinct character or style of housing in the immediate surroundings, this avoids overly prescriptive design parameters for the scheme.

The homes are of traditional appearance and will complement the local vernacular. Pitched roofs will be used throughout the development, with dark grey roof tiles. Some of the house types will have dormers, breaking up the roofscape.

The quality of the development will be enhanced by using two contrasting brick colours, creating variety.

The dwellings will feature decorative brickwork including soldier course window headers and cills and bands running across the façade. This detailing will be in a contrasting red and gold brick and will break up elevations, creating an attractive street scene.



Chapter 4 - Built Form

This refers to the three-dimensional pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings and open spaces.



The proposed layout makes effective use of the site and responds appropriately to its surroundings, in line with Policy CS19 of the Knowsley Core Strategy, which requires consideration of density, siting, layout, height, scale, massing, and orientation.

The development will infill the vacant plot of a former public house on Pilch Lane, removing a long-standing local eyesore. The cul-de-sac design, leading to private drives and a turning area, reflects similar nearby layouts such as Ashfarm Court and Charles Walk.

This layout and urban grain aligns with the suburban character of the area, whilst meeting the Council's standards on residential amenity, road widths, vehicle turning, parking, private garden space and landscaping.

Buildings in Dovecot are typically low rise, consisting of 2-3-storeys with pitched roofs. Civic buildings such as the adjacent church and school are the anomaly here. The proposed development has been designed to be consistent with this pattern of development featuring a mix of 2 and 2.5 storey homes.

The proposals offer a strong built frontage to Pilch Lane, whilst these properties will be served from the rear, there is a good level of fenestration and visual interest on these elevations facing outwards. Importantly, it will bring vitality back to the street frontage and remove a derelict void.

Views into the site will provide a typically suburban setting, with garden space and open land to the rear forming the setting.

Chapter 5 - Movement

Patterns of movement include walking and cycling, access to facilities, employment and servicing, parking and the convenience of public transport.

The access to the site will remain to the north east off Pilch Lane. This will form a cul-de-sac style road, terminating at two points, along a north east / south west axis directly from the access, and a separate turning head to the east.

The layout will encourage low vehicle speeds and improve the road safety of the development. Road widths will typically be 5.5m with pedestrian footways on both sides. Private drives will be 6m width and shared spaces.

A footway will be available to residents through plots 22-29 and 30-35 via Pilch Lane. Pedestrian access will also be possible from the site entrance with Pilch Lane.

The layout provides 64 parking spaces, with visitor parking offered. The majority of the parking spaces will be located to the side or rear of curtilages and in an accessible, naturally surveilled location. This will ensure that the parking needs of residents can be accommodated with no impact on the surrounding highway network. Each of the dwellings will also be fitted with an EV charging point .

The area is well served by public transport with regular bus services stopping nearby on Pilch Lane (#9, #15 & #C42) connecting the area with Huyton and Liverpool City Centre. Roby Station and Broad Green Station are also situated 1.3km away on the City Merseyrail Line.

The proposed layout and accessibility of the scheme satisfies Policy CS19 criteria in the Knowsley Core Strategy.

The Transport Statement has concluded that the proposed development would not result in an 'unacceptable impact on highway safety' nor have a 'severe' impact on the operation of the highway network in terms of safety and capacity. The proposal complies with local and national policy and guidance and is acceptable on highways, parking and access grounds.



Chapter 6 - Nature

Natural features should be integrated into a well-designed development. They include natural and designed landscapes, high quality public open spaces, street trees and other trees, grass, planning and water.

The proposals are accompanied by a Phase 1 Ecological Assessment (PEA), a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment and a Landscape Plan. The PEA confirms that the site is not within close proximity to statutorily protected sites.

The land comprises bare ground that has been encroached by ephemeral vegetation, with small areas of modified grassland and scattered scrub. Reasonable avoidance measures are recommended to address the potential for amphibians and hedgehogs, a bat scoping survey for a wall on-site, and a standard nesting season clearance condition.

Enhancements include bird and bat boxes. The landscaping plan proposes 340 sqm of grassland, 27 trees, 262m of hedgerow and 493 shrubs, which will enhance biodiversity.

The BNG Assessment identifies that the proposed development site has recently been subject to vegetation clearance works. As such,

the majority of the proposed development site comprises bare ground that has been encroached by ephemeral vegetation, with small areas of modified grassland and scattered scrub.

Based on the landscape plans provided, the proposed development will result in a net loss of 3.27 habitat units (-73.0%), with a net gain of 0.60 hedgerow units (a net gain beyond 10% due to the baseline value of 0 hedgerow units). Off-site credits will be made to ensure that the proposals demonstrate a 10% BNG uplift.

The site will provide habitats for nesting birds, and bats, as shown in the accompanying Bird and Bat Box Roosting Plan.

These measures will help to ensure that the net environmental impact of the development is minimised and opportunities for enhancement are taken in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS8.



Chapter 7 - Public Spaces

Public spaces are streets, squares and other spaces that are open to all and which are the setting for most movement. The design of a public space encompasses its siting and integration into the wider network of routes.

Due to the size and nature of the site, open spaces opportunities are limited to private gardens and shared spaces.

All of the dwellings benefit from rear gardens, with these being communal spaces for the maisonettes. Private

gardens are a minimum of 10m in depth. A schedule of private garden space has been provided within the submission. This confirms that each property will have an average of 82 sqm of garden space with maisonettes sharing communal garden spaces.

The site layout includes two shared surfaces, one at the end of the south-western road and another at the eastern cul-de-sac, both intended to enhance social engagement and prioritise pedestrian use.

The shared surfaces are designed to reduce vehicle speeds and foster a safe, pleasant environment. This approach encourages greater community interaction and transforms streets into multifunctional spaces. There will be no through-traffic and vehicle trips will be limited to property access and associated service deliveries only.

A footpath is proposed between two blocks of maisonettes along the site frontage. This will encourage community interaction and natural surveillance.

In addition to spaces provided within the development, the site benefits from easy access to Dovecot Park approx. 400m to the north west. This provides a play area, mini-beach and playing fields for sports and activities.

More informal open space is located at Bright Park, approx. 900m to the west. This includes woodland and nature walks.



Chapter 8 - Uses

Sustainable places include a mix of uses that support everyday activities including to live, work and play.

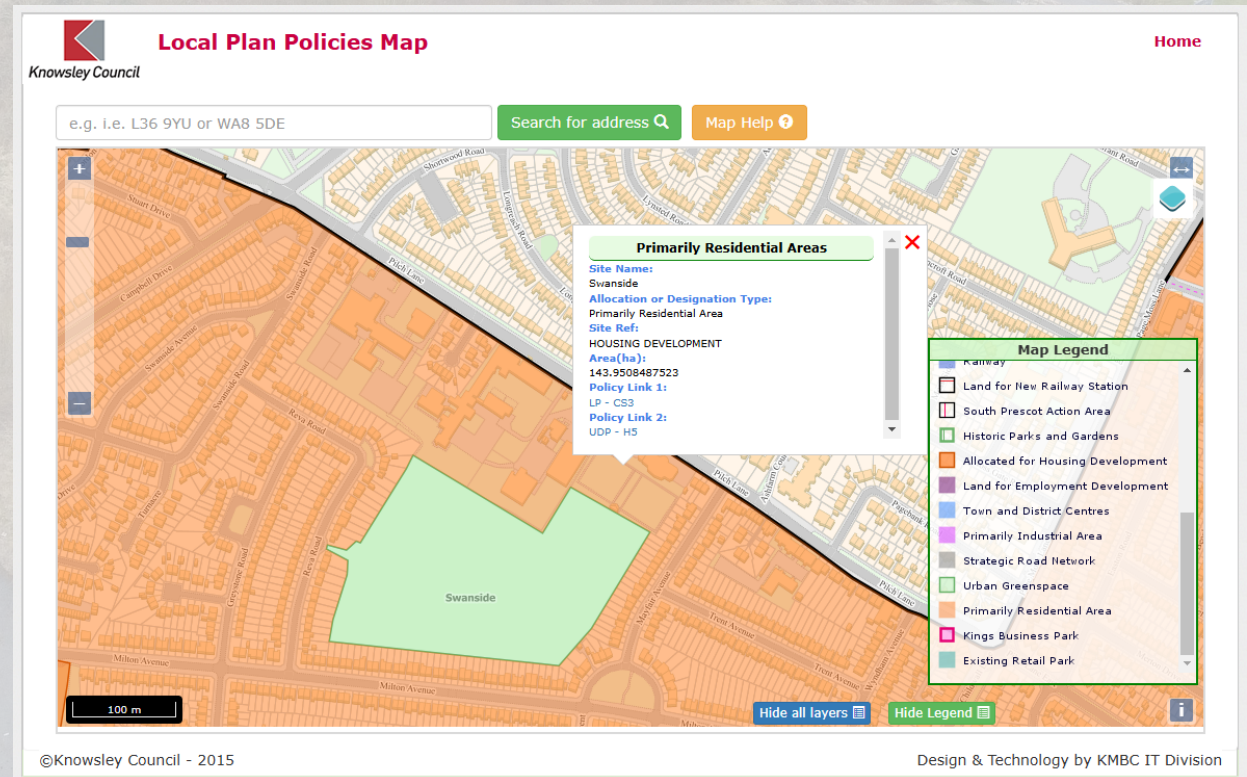
The principal use of the site will be residential, with 35 affordable dwellings provided. This use is appropriate to the surrounding area and designation as 'Primarily Residential Area' in the Local Plan.

The Core Strategy is supportive of new residential development, seeking growth whilst rebalancing the housing stock to better meet housing needs and demands. On a site-specific level, the site is designated as a Predominantly Residential Area in the composite Proposals Map. As such the principle of development is acceptable here, subject to design and amenity criteria in UDP Policy H5.

The proposals are strongly supported by the NPPF, which seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing, building at appropriate densities on previously developed sites in accessible locations within existing urban areas.

We have demonstrated that there is a need for general housing completions in Knowsley, when set against an increased requirement in the Standard Method. We have also shown that the proposals are needed to meet affordable housing demand in the area.

The above analysis of the proposed use confirms that housing is more than appropriate in this location.



Chapter 9 - Homes and Buildings

Well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable, having regard to internal and external environments. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users and are adaptable to the changing needs of occupants over time.

The National Design Guide notes that well-designed neighbourhoods need to include an integrated mix of house types that reflect local housing need and market demand. The development is socially inclusive in that it provides affordable housing to complement market housing within the wider area.

Upon submission, all of the homes are proposed to be affordable rented tenure. However, this may be subject to change, pending Homes England grant funding announcements. Regardless, the proposed 100% affordable rented tenure is broadly in keeping with the evidence base, which recommends that this tenure predominantly makes up most of the affordable housing need in Knowsley.

Several aspects of the proposed dwellings have been designed so as to make the dwellings suitable or easily adaptable to

the needs of the elderly or those with restricted mobility.

All of the properties will meet nationally described spacing standards, with 12 of the properties being M4(2) compliant (34%).

The proposals comply with paragraphs 63 and 71 of NPPF, which encourage meeting the needs of different groups, including those requiring affordable homes. They also comply with Core Strategy Policy CS15 requiring affordable homes. As the proposed development comprises 100% affordable housing this level of provision goes significantly beyond this requirement. Such a benefit is a powerful material consideration in favour of this application.



Chapter 10 - Resources

Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design identifies measures to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The proposal makes beneficial use of previously developed land in a sustainable location, close to shops, services and public transport. The land was previously occupied by a public house and has been vacant for some time.

The development will make efficient use of the land as encouraged by the National Planning Policy Framework, making an important contribution to housing supply and meeting affordable housing need by utilising a vacant site within the settlement boundary. Making effective use of infill sites like the application site reduces the prospective need for greenfield development to accommodate housing need.

The development will follow a 'fabric first' approach in accordance with the first principle of the Energy Hierarchy, ensuring that dwellings are designed to reduce heat loss and minimise energy demand. Where energy use is

required, this is minimised through technology such as ultra-low emission boilers, intelligent heating controls and dual zone space heating systems. In addition, heat pumps will be installed throughout the development. The images in the adjacent collage illustrate the condition of the site, the charging points used, an example of a Breck Scheme utilizing PV panels and an ultra-low emission boiler.

The sustainable location will reduce the need to travel, and bus services, walking, and cycling provide realistic alternatives to the use of the private car. The provision of cycle parking facilities and electric vehicle charging points will also help to reduce the environmental impact.

The proposals make the best use of resources, in accordance with Policy CS22. the Knowsley Core Strategy and the Lifetime Homes Standards.



Chapter 11 - Lifespan

Well-designed places should be suitable for long-term stewardship by landowners, communities and local authorities. Management and maintenance regimes should be considered from an early stage and they should be adaptable to changing needs and evolving technologies.

The residential development will be built by Breck Homes, who are a respected housebuilder. The dwellings will be sustainable, long lasting with quality assured by the reputation of the developer and their experience throughout the region.

The entire development will be transferred on completion to a locally active Registered Provider, who will manage and maintain the properties and grounds in perpetuity.

The internal road serving the development and the footway connecting to Pilch Lane will be designed and built to adoptable standards and will be adopted by Knowsley MBC Highways via a Section 38 Agreement. This will ensure the long term maintenance and management of the road and pavements, ensuring that they are upkept to an appropriate standard.

All of the properties will meet nationally described spacing standards, with 12 of the properties being M4(2) compliant (34%). The homes will be designed to make the dwellings suitable or easily adaptable to the needs of the elderly or those with restricted mobility.

The long-term management of planting, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements will be achieved through the control of the entire site by a locally active Registered Provider on completion.



Conclusion

The proposed scheme consists of 35 affordable dwellings located on previously developed land off Pilch Lane in Huyton. The site is situated within a predominantly residential area, where new housing encouraged, and will be of an appropriate nature and scale to the character of the area.

We have identified a strong need for affordable homes in Knowsley. The provision of 35 homes, including 1-bed maisonettes and 2 to 4-bed homes for affordable rented tenure will make a significant contribution to meeting local demand, including for adaptable dwellings.

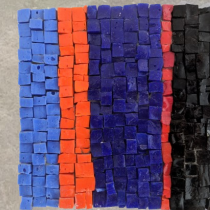
The proposals will infill a vacant site along a built-up frontage. The proposed density reflects the urban and sustainable location. The homes will be constructed in a traditional style, with building materials which reflect those used in the surrounding area, providing variety and visual interest. The homes will positively contribute towards the character of the area.

The form of development reflects its surroundings, whilst making optimal use of previously developed land. Rear gardens are provided throughout, with front gardens and verges where available. Environmental sustainability is enhanced by the site's accessible location and sustainable features such as heat pumps.

The development is well located for public transport and will be accessible to residents and guests by a well-planned road layout.

The management and maintenance of the scheme by a locally active registered provider will ensure that the quality of the scheme is maintained over its lifespan.

In summary, the proposals perform well against the 10 characteristics of a well-designed place, as described in the National Design Guide and comply with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy and New Residential Development SPD. The proposals should be positively received and planning permission granted without undue delay.



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